



The Faithful Steward

A Newsletter of the Holy Orthodox Church in North America

An Astonishing but True Story

by Archimandrite Panteleimon
of Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Brookline, MA

Some fifty years ago, when I was a young novice and monk on the Holy Mountain of Athos, I heard a story told by senior monks about an amazing event concerning a young monk who left his obedience and went back to the world, got married, and had a child. He did not tell his wife that he had been a monk. Some years passed and his little son was already seven or eight years old.

One day, he was playing with his little son, whereupon the little boy said to him, "Papa! Papa! What is this? Purty! Purty!"

His father did not know what the child was referring to and so he asked him, "What is what?" Then the little boy traced with his finger on the bare chest of his father the sign of the Cross, with the lance and sponge, and the letters of the Holy Schema. His father was shaken and told the little boy that he was not wearing anything on his bare chest. That it was all in his imagination.



*Holy Angelic Schema
from Holy Transfiguration Monastery*

By this time his wife had become suspicious and confronted him, whereupon he told her that he had been a tonsured monk on the Holy Mountain and had left without a blessing. She grieved over this and told him that instead of a blessing, he had brought a burning fire into their home. From then on she refused to have any relations with him. Shortly after, he returned to the Holy Mountain and never left again.

I asked the fathers what his name was, when this all took place, and what monastery he was from. They were vague concerning all these questions, but gave me to understand that it took place at the beginning of the twentieth or the end of the nineteenth century. They also told me the monk was from Karakalou or Kostamonitou monastery or thereabouts and that he had reposed in the 1950s.

Since then I have repeated this story many times, especially to monastics, but also to lay people. Most believed with simplicity that it was a true story and marvelled at the love and mercy of God. Some doubted that it was a true story and said that the monks invented it as a para-

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ble to teach the young monks and instill awe and fear in them as to the inviolability of the monastic vows.

Now in the autumn years of my life, I read in a religious publication from Cyprus, *Orthodox Witness* (No. 67, Spring/Summer, 2002, pp. 76-80), a detailed account of this story written by the cell attendant of the repentant monk! The monk's name was Makarios, and his cell attendant was named Damascene. To my great surprise, I learned that the monk of this story reposed in 1975 at the age of 84, and that he was the guest master of the Monastery of Gregoriou. I had twice visited the Monastery of Gregoriou in the 50s and 60s of the past century and, of course, met Fr. Makarios, who was the guest master, never suspecting that this was the monastic in the story related above.

Fr. Makarios was born Menas, in 1892, in the village of Argos of the Peloponnesus, but grew up in Athens. He was an only child. His father's name was Christos Zoëopoulos and he had a hotel and restaurant close to the Church of Saint Constantine at Omonia Square. Thus, he was well to do.

At the age of thirty, Menas decided to become a monastic and left for the Holy Mountain. This plunged his parents into great sorrow, especially his mother, who had put all her future hopes in him.

Menas went to the Monastery of Gregoriou in the year 1922 at the age of thirty. Three years later, as was the custom of the time, he was tonsured into the Great Schema. In the same year, he developed a hernia and went to Thessalonika to have an operation. His mother somehow learned of this and went to Thessalonika and convinced him to have the operation in Athens where she could tend to him. There, through her tears and pleadings, she convinced him to return to the world and take care of his parents in their old age and also to inherit the vast paternal estate. Thus, he remained in the world and in time got married and had a son.

During the nine years that he was in the world, he never abandoned his piety. He would keep his monastic rule of prayer with the prayer rope. He had holy relics in his house, and attended church at Saint Eliseos where the saintly Papa Nicholas Planas served and the two famous Greek authors, Alexander Papadiamantis and Alexander Moraitides, were the primary chanters. He chanted also.

One day he visited Alexander Moraitides and entrusted to him his secret and asked his counsel.

"Kyr Alexander," he said, "I have something to tell you."

"Gladly, whatever you wish."

"I, as you see me and know me, am not Menas Zoëopoulos, but rather the monk Makarios Gregoriátis [of Gregoriou Monastery]. What should I do to be saved? On the one side, the strong family bonds press me and on the other, the censure of my conscience and the fear of eternal damnation have brought me to an impasse. I do not know what to do. What do you counsel me?"

Kyr Alexander took out of a drawer the Great and Angelic Schema of the monastics, kissed it and said to him, "Do you see this Schema? Twelve years now I kiss it every day and await the blessed hour when I can put it on. And you ask me what to do? Why, go back immediately. There exist repentance and salvation. The agony that you have for your soul's salvation is a sign of divine mercy. As for your family, have no care. God will provide for it."

(Here one should note that years later, when his wife reposed, Alexander Moraitides received the Great Schema with the name Andronikos, monk.)

Another event which unfolded in this saga was that Fr. Makarios' spiritual father on the Holy Mountain, the priest George, never ceased writing him and encouraging him to return. One day, one of these letters fell into the hands of his wife, who did not know that her husband had formerly been a monk on the Holy Mountain.

When he came home that night, she reproached him and told him that from then on she would not have any relations with him as a husband. Her brother, who worked with him in the hotel business, knew the secret, but never told his sister.

In the meantime, any and all enterprises which he undertook with his brother-in-law failed. Once, he went with him to Pyrgos of Ileias in the Peloponnesus and opened a movie house, something new for that time and place. But it closed quickly for lack of clientele. Thus, even though he had a perpetual icon lamp burning in his home and holy relics in his icon corner, all his business endeavors came to nothing. It was as if God were chasing him with failures, one after another, in order to compel him to remember his vows of poverty and to struggle in the monastic estate.

But the final event that shook him and gave him to understand that, although he had denied his monastic tonsure, he was still a monk in the eyes of God, is the following:

On a certain evening, even as he was tired and lying on his bed, he had his little son on his chest and was playing with him, caressing and kissing him. Suddenly

the little boy beheld the Angelic Schema on his father's chest and began to cry out excitedly, "Papa! Papa! What is this? Purty, purty!" His father could not see anything on his chest and tried to calm the little boy down, saying that there was nothing on his chest. Whereupon the little one began to trace with his finger the whole Angelic Schema—Cross, lance, sponge and all the accompanying letters. This horrified his father and he understood that God still loved him and considered him a monk.

Without notifying his wife and other relatives, he tearfully kissed his child and departed Athens with the night train for Thessalonika. On the morrow, he left by boat for the Holy Mountain and returned to Gregoriou, the monastery of his obedience.

From then on, he remained in the monastery for forty-one years, diligently working in all his obediences, especially as the guest master, in which he was well-trained by his former family occupation in the world.

Father Makarios was born in 1892. At the age of thirty he entered the Monastery of Gregoriou on the Holy Mountain. At the age of thirty-three, he was tonsured. He went back to the world, got married, and had a son. Nine years later, he repented and, at the age of forty-two, returned to the Holy Mountain where he lived another forty-one years in earnest repentance and daily tears, remembering his fall and God's love and providence. He reposed at the age of eighty-four years. May God grant rest unto his soul.

Securalism's Ongoing Debt to Christianity

by John D. Steinrucken

www.americanthinker.com/2010/03/secularisms_ongoing_debt_to_ch.html

Rational thought may provide better answers to many of life's riddles than does faith alone. However, it is rational to conclude that religious faith has made possible the advancement of Western civilization. That is, the glue that has held Western civilization together over the centuries is the Judeo-Christian tradition. To the extent that the West loses its religious faith in favor of non-judgmental secularism, then to the same extent, it loses that which holds all else together.

Succinctly put: Western civilization's survival, including the survival of open secular thought, depends on the continuance within our society of the Judeo-Christian tradition.

Arguably the two most defining and influential Christian concepts are summarized in two verses of the New Testament. Those verses are Romans 14:10 and John 8:32.

Romans 14:10, says: "Remember, each of us must stand alone before the judgment seat of God." That verse explicitly recognizes not only each man's uniqueness, but, of necessity, implies that man has free will—that individual acts do result in consequences, and that those acts will be judged against objective standards. It is but a step from the habit of accepting individual accountability before God to thinking of individual accountability in secular things. It thus follows that personal and political freedom is premised upon the Christian concept of the unique individual exercising accountable free will.

John 8:32 says: "And you will know the truth and

the truth will set you free." Whatever the theological meanings that have been imputed to that verse, its implicit secular meaning is that the search for truth is in and of itself praiseworthy.

Although I am a secularist (atheist, if you will), I accept that the great majority of people would be morally and spiritually lost without religion. Can anyone seriously argue that crime and debauchery are not held in check by religion? Is it not comforting to live in a community where the rule of law and fairness are respected? Would such be likely if Christianity were not there to provide a moral compass to the great majority? Do we secularists not benefit out of all proportion from a morally responsible society?

An orderly society is dependent on a generally accepted morality. There can be no such morality without religion. Has there ever been a more perfect and concise moral code than the one Moses brought down from the mountain?

Those who doubt the effect of religion on morality should seriously ask the question: Just what are the immutable moral laws of secularism? Be prepared to answer, if you are honest, that such laws simply do not exist! The best answer we can ever hear from secularists to this question is a hodgepodge of strained relativist talk of situational ethics. They can cite no overriding authority other than that of fashion. For the great majority in the West, it is the Judeo-Christian tradition which offers a template assuring a life of inner peace toward the world at large—a peace which translates to a workable liberal society.

A few years ago, I saw on television the interview of a reforming prostitute and drug addict. When asked why she had chosen to reform, her simple answer was, “I don’t want to go to Hell.” I am sure that she had previously received hours of counseling from secular social workers, all without discernible effect. What did it for her was the simplicity of a belief in Heaven and Hell, and with knowing that one day, she would stand alone before her God to be judged.

For the majority of a culture’s population, religious tradition is inextricably woven into their self-awareness. It gives them their identity. It is why those of religious faith are more socially stable and experience less difficulty in forming and maintaining binding attachments than do we secularists.

Most men do have a need for God. This, I think, is proven by the desperation with which so many of those who have forsaken the God of their fathers (it has been fashionable to do so) are now reaching for meaning in eastern exotica, new-age mumbo-jumbo, and other attempts to fill the spiritual hole.

Or they surrender themselves to secular ideologies or do-good causes, especially those in which they can mass with others in solidarity, shouting in unison mindless, ritualistic simplicities and waving placards of hackneyed and inane slogans.

Secularism has never offered the people a practical substitute for religion. From the time of the philosophes with their certainties in 1789, the rationally thought-through utopias of those who think themselves the elite of the world, when actually put to the test, have not merely come to naught. Attempts during those two centuries to put into practice utopian visions have caused huge sufferings. But they, the clever ones, never look back. In their conceit, they delude themselves that next time they are sure to get it right. They create justifications for their fantasies by rewriting the histories.

We secularists should recognize that we owe much to the religionists, that we are not threatened by them, that we should grant to them their world. Why should we be exercised over a Christmas Crèche in front of the county court house? It is appropriately symbolic of Christianity’s benign but essential role as guarantor of our political and legal systems—that is, of a moral force independent of and *transcendent to the political*. And what harm will come to a child who hears prayer in the schoolroom? I daresay harm is far more likely to come in those places where prayer is not heard.

The fact is, we secularists gain much from living in a world in which excesses are held in check by religion. Religion gives society a secure and orderly environment within which we secularists can safely play out our creativities. Free and creative secularism seems to me to function best when within the stable milieu provided by Christianity.

To the extent that Western elites distance themselves from their Judeo-Christian cultural heritage in favor of secular constructs, and as they give deference to a multicultural acceptance that all beliefs are of equal validity, they lose their will to defend against a determined attack from another culture, such as from militant Islam. For having destroyed the ancient faith of their people, they will have found themselves with nothing to defend. For the culture above which they had fancied themselves to have risen, the culture which had given them their material sustenance, will by then have become but a hollow shell.

An elite must, by definition, have a much larger base upon which to stand. For Western civilization, that base has over the centuries been the great mass of commoners who have looked to Christianity for their moral guidance and for strength to weather adversity. The elitists delude themselves if they think the common people will look to them for guidance once their religious beliefs have been eroded away.

The greatest crime of the elitists—if they have their way—will be their failure to use their gifts of intellect to lead and to preserve. Their sin will be the abandonment of that ninety percent of the population which had provided them with the secure societal and material wherewithal for practicing their conceits and dilettantes.

If the elitists of our Western civilization want to survive, then it is incumbent upon them to see to the preservation of the hoary, time-honored faith of the great majority of the people. This means that our elitists should see that their most valued vested interest is the preservation within our culture of Christianity and Judaism. It is not critical that they themselves believe, only that they should publicly hold in high esteem the institutions of Christianity and Judaism, and to respect those who do believe and to encourage and to give leeway to those who, in truth, will be foremost in the trenches defending us against those who would have us all bow down to a different and unaccommodating faith.

Hierarchichal Liturgy at Saint Joseph of Arimathea Church



Bishops, clergy, and servers gathered for the Hierarchical Liturgy at Saint Joseph of Arimathea Church on the Third Sunday of Pascha, the parish feast day and its 25th anniversary. The Liturgy concluded the Synod meeting held April 15-16.

New Address for Saint Joseph of Arimathea Church

Saint Joseph of Arimathea Church,
510 Whitevale Road,
Pickering, ON L0H 1M0
www.stjosephorthodoxchurch.ca

New Rector in Saint Louis



On Saturday, April 18/May 1, 2010, Father Mark Beesley (second from left) was ordained to the priesthood at Saint Katherine of Sinai Mission Church in Saint Louis, Missouri. He is seen here with Archdeacon Andrew, Bishop Demetrius, and Father Michael Azkoul. Father Mark takes over as rector from Father Michael, who announced his retirement at the ordination ceremony.

Rector's Son Becomes His Assistant Priest



On May 27/June 9, 2010, Father Michael Knox (second from left) was ordained to the priesthood at the Orthodox Church of Saint John the Confessor in Ipswich, Massachusetts, where he will serve as assistant priest. He is seen here with Metropolitan Ephraim, Bishop Demetrius, and Father John Knox.

Future Trips with St. Paul's Fellowship of Labor

St. Spyridon's Church, Long Island, Bahamas: Dec. 22, 2010–Jan. 5, 2011
St. Xenia Parish, Guatemala: January 30–February 7, 2011
St. Peter and Paul Mission Parish, Tucson, AZ: March 2011
St. Gregory of Sinai Monastery, Kelseyville, CA: April 2011 (male trip)
Holy Land Pilgrimage, Jerusalem: June 17–25, 2011

Contact St. Paul's Fellowship of Labor by calling (814) 386-5254 or by emailing thespfl@gmail.com.

Google Search Led To Ordination



*Back row: Diaconissa Tamara, Deacon Christopher, his brother-in-law Ivan, Fathers John Fleaser and Dimitry Kukunov
Front row: Bishop Demetrius, Metropolitan Ephraim*

As Father Isaac of Holy Transfiguration Monastery divulged to the faithful on St. Anna's feast day, July 25/August 7, 2010, newly-ordained Deacon Christopher Catanzano and his wife Tamara came to St. Anna's parish via Google. Father Christopher had converted from Roman Catholicism into the OCA while studying English Literature and Religion at Middlebury College. There he met his wife Tamara, an international student studying Math. After they were married, celebrating the Nativity on the new calendar felt alien to Tamara, a Serbian. So, for a time they attended services at the local Serbian Church. But Father Christopher was uncomfortable with the ethnic focus of the church and wanted to hear the liturgy in English. Thus, there was only one solution: Google "Old Calendar English Speaking Orthodox Church, Boston." Results, only one: St. Anna's Parish in Roslindale.

New Website for St. John of San Francisco Chapel

St. John of San Francisco Chapel in Frankfort, Illinois, now has a website: stjohn-hocnachicago.org. Hopefully more people interested in true Orthodoxy from the tri-state area will visit us and become members. This is the initial offering, and we are open to suggestions to improve.

Theodore Pappas
theodorepappas@att.net

Third Priest for Pillars of Orthodoxy Church



Father Christos Patitsas was ordained to the priesthood on August 9/22 at Pillars of Orthodoxy Church in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and will assist Fathers Rodion Laskowski and Peter Farnsworth. He is seen here with Metropolitan Ephraim and Presbytera Katina.

Concord Deacon Ordained on Parish Feast Day



Deacon Alexander Buterbaugh was ordained August 15/28 at the Church of the Dormition of the Theotokos in Concord, New Hampshire. He is seen here with his mother-in-law, Maria, mother, Niki, Bishop Demetrius, wife, Fotini, father-in-law, Jordan, daughter, Yianna, and son, Jordan.

Monks Ordained in their Native Land



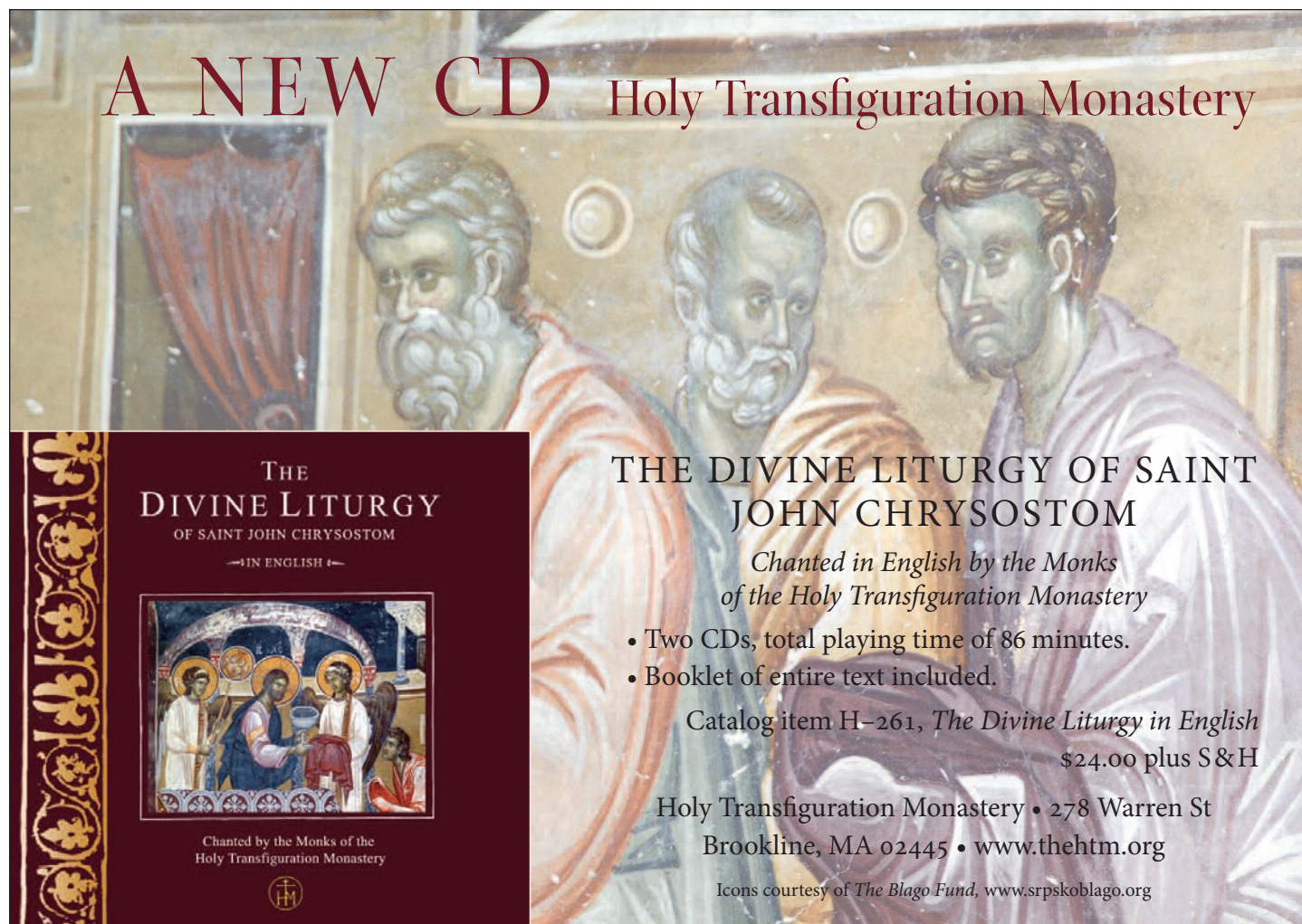
Hierodeacon Agathangelus and Hieromonk Menas, both Canadian, were ordained by Metropolitan Makarios at Holy Theotokos Convent in Newmarket, Ontario, on August 16/29. They reside at Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Brookline, Massachusetts, and will serve at the monastery, Holy Nativity Convent, and parishes in the surrounding area.

2011 Wall Calendars On Sale Now!


The Holy Orthodox Metropolis of Boston will be printing the 2011 church wall calendar. Orders are now being accepted for next year's calendar at a cost of \$10.50 plus S/H. Note: Discounts are available. Included with the calendar at no extra charge is a booklet containing the daily Epistle and Gospel readings. We anticipate distribution in October 2010. This will make a great Nativity gift for family and friends.

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Review

by Benjamin Williams

This recording was professionally recorded, edited and mastered, which results in a CD whose quality is every bit as good (and beautiful, in as much as each CD has icon images on them) as the packaging. This recording has been long awaited from the Monastery that has set a standard in America for the highest quality translation and publication of liturgical service books. The sound is crystal clear, the singing is engaging and devotional because it is exactly what you would hear were you to worship at the Monastery for the Divine Liturgy. With one exception, the arrangements, like the translation, are those of the Monastery. Added to that is the completeness of the project—not just hymns from the Divine Liturgy—but the entire service with prayers and hymns most seldom heard (*i.e.* the Blessing of the Kollyva and the Dismissal hymns), and the result is simply terrific. A long awaited and worthy project, well executed! Fr. Isaac, Abbot of the Monastery, summarizes the goal of this undertaking as “Our choir put a lot of love and labor into making it, just as our translators do for the liturgical texts. We hope that English speaking Orthodox Christians will be edified and strengthened by it.”

Benjamin Williams is on the Advisory Board of Liturgica.com, the biggest Orthodox CD distributor in the United States.

Human Failings

by Metropolitan Ephraim of Boston

Recently, I received a letter from one of our priests regarding some problems the Roman Catholic clergy have been having of late. This, in part, is what he wrote:

Laymen ask what we would do if we had sexual abuse allegations lodged against our clergy. I respond that, if a clergyman were, indeed, found guilty by our Church of any sexual “crimes,” the clergyman would be defrocked on the spot, and the same for any hierarch who knowingly ignored such conduct. I further note that our Church, from ancient times, has a canonical procedure already in place stipulating how to investigate such allegations (spiritual court, witnesses, etc.) and how to act according to the findings of the investigation. Our Church has no ambiguity whatsoever regarding how to act to handle such charges or what it thinks of such moral crimes. And then, [in addition] I comment that, for all its claims to be the legitimate church and for all its endless shelves of law books, the papist church clearly doesn’t know what’s in its books because, among them, are the ancient canons I referred to above, which would have taken care of the problem for the Roman Catholics if they had just bothered to take those canons, that they claim are theirs, seriously. The Roman Catholics wouldn’t need all these new-fangled commissions and conferences if they hadn’t succumbed to heresy and fallen away.

As our clergyman wrote above, the Orthodox Catholic Church does, indeed, have all the canonical regulations in place for dealing with these issues, and, in addition, it has a very long history of coping with human failings, going all the way back to Adam and Eve.

Any spiritual father can tell you that the spectrum of human sin is very wide, and our capacity to harm ourselves and others is impressive indeed. At the same time, by God’s grace, a person’s ability to repent and experience genuine remorse is also extraordinary.

As a result, one understands immediately that the Church’s role in all this is not to punish mercilessly, nor to absolve at the drop of a hat, but to help restore

and prepare the soul for eternal salvation. In other words, a lot of T.L.C. is needed. That stands for “Tough Loving Care” and “Tender Loving Care.” Strictness and *economia*: “the two hands of the Church.”

Which brings us to the remarkable article that Hieromonk Basil of Holy Transfiguration Monastery prepared a few years ago for *Kibotós*, the Greek-language periodical of our Metropolis. It was remarkable because of the impressive collection of primary source material Fr. Basil gathered, taken from many Orthodox Christian Lives of the Saints, *Paterica*, etc. These valuable sources reveal to us the *Church’s*—not the world’s—approach to the issue of human failings. The Church’s approach is very far, indeed, from the self-righteous approach of some, and the cynical attitude of the secular media. Fr. Basil’s article has been published as a separate pamphlet, “Scandals in the Church,” by the Metropolis of Boston.

We all fall short of the glory of God, and all need healing. The question is: How can we best encourage and promote a person’s healing? As in dealing with physical ailments, so also in spiritual maladies, many factors must be taken into account by the spiritual physician.

The material published in *Kibotós* should help shed much light on this subject—derived, as it is, from the Church’s living waters of Holy Tradition, and the life in Christ. With the help of God, we present some of this material in the current issue of *The Faithful Steward*:

Where Do You Order Me to Put Him?

One of the holy fathers heard that a brother fell into the sin of fornication. The elder said, “He acted shamefully.” After a few days, the brother who had allegedly fallen reposed. An Angel of the Lord went to the elder bringing the soul of the brother and said, “Do you see him whom you condemned? He has died. Where do you order me to put him? In the Kingdom of God or in Hell?” Until his death, the elder unceasingly asked for forgiveness from God with tears.

The Great Book of the Holy Elders,
Vol. 4, Hermitage of the Birth of the Theotokos,
Thessalonica, 9:42.

The Monk and the Young Jewish Woman

Above all, Saint John the Almsgiver, Patriarch of Alexandria, ever honoured and revered the monkish habit and felt special sympathy for any monk who was hard pressed for his bodily needs. And he had this peculiarity which was not shared by many, that he would never listen to an accusation, either false or true, against any wearer of the monkish habit. For owing to the suggestion of some slanderers he once had the following experience:

A monk wandered round in the city, begging alms for several days, accompanied by a rather young girl; some persons who saw him were scandalized and imagined she was his wife, and therefore carried accusations against him to the Patriarch, ‘Because, reverend father,’ said they, ‘he is turning the angelic robe of the monkish life into ridicule, by having a girl as wife.’

Accordingly the Patriarch thinking to prevent sins against God—Who had appointed him to this end—immediately gave orders for the woman to be beaten and separated from him, and for the monk to be scourged and to be imprisoned in solitary confinement. The Saint’s order was carried out with all speed, and in the night the monk appeared to him in his dreams, showing him his back which was all torn to ribbons—for the church police-officers had scourged him pitilessly—and said to him: ‘So it please you, my lord Patriarch, this once you have made a mistake as any other man might,’ and with these words he vanished.

In the morning the holy man recalled the dream which had come to him in the night and sat on his bed full of thought. Then quickly he sent and had the monk brought to him by his chancellor from the place where he had been confined, for the blessed man kept wondering in his mind whether he would resemble the monk whom he had seen in his dream. So when the monk came in, walking with great difficulty—for he could hardly move because of the terrible flogging he had endured—and the Patriarch saw his face, he remained speechless and immovable and buried in thought, unable to utter a sound. Only with his hand he motioned to the monk to sit down near him on his couch. After he had regained his self-possession and signed himself with the Cross, he begged the monk to gird a cloth round him and then to undress without shame so that he might see whether his back was in such a state as he had seen in his dream; with much reluctance the monk consented, girt on his own loin-cloth, and began to undress. Now, as he was undressing

to show his back to the holy Patriarch, by the unexpected will of God the loin-cloth he had on got loose and dropped to the ground, and all there saw that he was a eunuch, which no one had noticed before as he was a very young man.

When the Patriarch and all who were with him had seen this and especially his horribly mutilated back, the Patriarch immediately sent and subjected to an *epitimion* those who had slandered the monk without inquiry, while he made many apologies to the most holy monk, saying that it was through ignorance that he had sinned against him and against God. Further, the just man gave to the monk this counsel: ‘It is not right, my son,’ he said, ‘that those who are clad in the holy and angelic robe as you are should wander about unguardedly in cities and, above all, they should not take a woman about with them to the scandal of the beholders.’ Then the monk in deep humility made his defence to the holy Patriarch, saying: ‘I assure you, master, I am not lying—I was in Gaza a few days ago and as I was coming out of the city to go and worship at the shrine of the holy abbot, Cyrus, this girl who has so skilfully hung herself on to me, met me—it was already evening—and falling at my feet she begged that she might journey with me; “For,” said she, “I am a Jewess and wish to become a Christian.” And then she began to invoke horrible curses upon me if I left her to perish. Therefore through fear of the judgment of God I took her, thinking that Satan does not send temptation to eunuchs; I did not realize that he does not spare anyone. So when we came to the church, your Holiness, and had finished our prayers, I baptized her there in the church of the holy abbot, Cyrus. And in simplicity of heart I travelled about with her asking a few alms in order that I might place her in a convent.’

When he heard this tale, the Patriarch said: ‘Upon my soul, how many hidden servants God has, and we, simple ones, do not know them!’ Then he related to all those who were present the vision concerning the monk which he had had in the night, and afterwards taking 100 *nomismata* in his hand, offered them to the monk. But he, the God-loving man and true monk, would not hear of taking any sum worth mentioning, but spoke these words to the Patriarch: ‘I do not want these coins, master, for if a monk has faith, he does not need money; and if he does need money, he has not faith.’ This remark more than anything else convinced his hearers that he was a servant of God. After kneeling before the Patriarch he went away in peace. From henceforth

therefore the Patriarch showed special honour and hospitality to monks, both to the good and to those who were reputed to be evil, and he at once built a hostel entirely for them and called it 'The Monks' Inn'.

From the Life of Saint John the Almsgiver,
Patriarch of Alexandria,
Three Byzantine Saints, Oxford, 1948, chap. 24.

The Abbot and Porphyria

Amongst his wonderful achievements the blessed Patriarch John attained unto this also, I mean never to judge his neighbour without good reason, or to listen to those who condemned him. Here let me give his teaching on this point from which all may profit.

A young man eloped with a nun and fled to Constantinople. On hearing this the just man almost died of grief. But some time later when sitting in his sacristy with some of the clergy and enjoying a profitable conversation someone happened to speak of the young man who had carried off the nun. Those who were sitting with the Saint began cursing the youth for having destroyed two souls, his own and the nun's. But the blessed man interrupted and stopped them saying: 'No, my children, do not speak like that! For I can prove to you that you yourselves are committing two sins, one because you are transgressing the commandment of Him Who said: "Judge not that ye be not judged," [Matt. 7:1] and the second because you do not know for certain whether they are still living in sin, and have not repented.

'For I read the life of a father which has the following story. In a certain city two monks were starting on an errand, and as one of the two passed through a square a harlot called out to him: "Save me, father, as Christ saved the harlot." And he, without a thought of men's censure, said to her: "Follow me!" and taking her by the hand he went out of the city openly in full view of everyone. Thus the rumour spread that the abbot had taken the woman, Porphyria, (for that was her name) to wife. As the two travelled on so that he might put her into a convent, the woman found a baby which had been exposed and was lying on the ground near a church and took it with her intending to bring it up. A year later some of the citizens came to the country where the abbot and Porphyria (she who had been a harlot) were staying, and seeing her with the child said to her, "You have certainly got a fine chick by the abbot," for she had not yet adopted the monastic robe.

The men who had seen her spread abroad the report when they got back to Tyre (for that was the city from which the abbot had taken her) that Porphyria had had a fine son by the abbot. "We saw him with our own eyes," they said, "and he is just like his father."

'Now when the abbot knew beforehand by revelation from God that he would shortly die, he said to the nun, Pelagia, for so he named her when he gave her the holy habit of a nun, "Let us go to Tyre for I have business there and I want you to come with me." She did not like to refuse, so she followed him and they both came to Tyre with the boy who was now seven years old.

'When the abbot fell ill with a mortal sickness, about a hundred people from the city came to visit him, and he said to them: "Bring hot coals!" When the censer arrived full of hot coals he took it and poured all the hot coals on to his robe and said: "Now be assured, brethren, that as God preserved the bush unburnt from the fire, and as the live coals have not even singed my robe, so, too, I have never committed sin with a woman from the day I was born." And all were struck dumb with amazement that his robe was not burnt by the fire and they glorified God Who has such servants, though they are unrecognized by men. From the example of the nun Pelagia who had once been a harlot several other harlots followed her and renounced the world and went with her into her convent. For after the monk, the servant of the Lord, who had received her profession, had fully satisfied everybody of his innocence, he surrendered his soul to the Lord in peace. For this reason,' the Patriarch continued, 'I warn you, my children, not to be so ready to mock at, or judge, the acts of other people.

'For we have often seen the sin of the fornicator, but his repentance, which he made in secret, we did not see, and we may have seen somebody steal, but we know nothing of the groanings and tears which he has offered to God. We still think of him as we saw him, a thief, a fornicator or a perjurer, but in the sight of God his secret repentance and confession have been accepted, and in His eyes he is honourable.'

Thus all were astonished at the teaching of this virtuous shepherd and teacher.

From the Life of Saint John the Almsgiver,
Patriarch of Alexandria,
Three Byzantine Saints, Oxford, 1948, chap. 43.

Saint John of Kronstadt Orthodox Church

Far removed from that small island of Kronstadt in western Russia, where Saint John worked his earthly vineyard, is the east coast of Florida where a small community of Orthodox faithful is struggling to complete a new church building dedicated to that great saint of modern times. Work is continuing on a modest little building which will house not only a relatively small chapel, but will also have room for visiting clergy and guests to stay for respite and retreat here in the “sunshine state.”

Construction began the day after Thomas Sunday, 2010, on the feast of Saint John Climacus. The flock joined Bishop Demetrius in blessing the land after services on Antipascha, when a small stone from Mount Sinai was planted in the ground under where the altar is planned to be. The builder has completed his work, and now the finishing touches are being completed by the faithful from all over the state and by the generosity, prayers, and donations of the faithful from all over the country.

Forty years ago, Father Michael Lightfoot, newly-reposed pastor of Holy Wisdom Church in Catlett, VA, was given icon panels for an iconostasis which was used far and wide by him in serving Orthodox communities

dedicated to the patron saint, John of Kronstadt. These same panels were lent to a family moving to Florida, in hopes that they could be used again in the formation of a new parish—under the condition that the parish also be named after Saint John of Kronstadt.

So it was that in the year 2000, the Saint John of Kronstadt Orthodox Church began. Services were first held in the home of a local family in Palm Coast, FL, a small town located between Saint Augustine and Daytona Beach. From 2002 until 2010, the parish rented community centers and other facilities, where members had to transport, set up, and then disassemble the chapel every time services could be held.

In 2003, a large donation was given to help purchase a piece of land in Bunnell, just west of Palm Coast, where a church could be built. For the next few years, the parish continued to save toward that goal, and God gave the increase, as He saw our great need. Other donations began to come in, and soon it became possible to consider a real church building in Florida.

Site engineering plans were drawn up that showed two possible phases of construction. “Phase 1” involves full site development with a church building and a “caretaker’s cottage.” However, the cost for this plan is currently out of reach. Therefore, with prayerful deliberation and guidance by Bishop Demetrius, it was deemed possible to start on the “Phase 2” project, which involves building just the caretaker’s cottage at the back of the property, designed to be used as part residence and part chapel (until the time comes when our merciful God will grant us construction of the church building).

Despota rightly calls this project a miracle. It is no small feat that in these troubled times new churches are being built to the Glory of God, lifting us out of the turbulent waters into the saving Ark He gives us. The faithful of Saint John of Kronstadt Church travel as much as five plus hours to help build the



new “Ark” and to come to services whenever we are granted visiting clergy. We hope this area and this new church in “the tropics” might also attract Orthodox Christians who wish to visit and/or stay.

Help is still needed to furnish the living quarters of the cottage and also for the set-up and adornment of the chapel itself. We ask always your prayers, and if you can help in any other way please email the church warden, Michael Christus, christus4@earthlink.net or call (386) 439-1237. The church is at 1006 Deen Rd., Bunnell, but send mail to 15 Magnolia St., Flagler Beach, FL 32136.

What a powerful intercessor we have in Father John, our beloved shepherd!



About Our Logo
A Divine Confirmation

The cross on our masthead commemorates the miraculous appearance of the sign of the Cross near Athens on Sept. 14 (according to the traditional Orthodox calendar) in 1925. Anti-Orthodox and secularist forces in power in Greece, together with the Ecumenical Patriarchate, had forced the changing of the traditional church calendar in 1924 as a first step toward uniting with the heterodox churches of the West. Shining in the evening sky on the traditional feast day of the Exaltation of the Cross, this extraordinary appearance of the Cross is a divine confirmation of Holy Tradition in the Orthodox Church and of the calendar as one facet of Holy Tradition.

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THE DIOCESE NEEDS SUPPORT

“Every good giving and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights” (James 1:17). The perfect gift is the one that only membership in the Church can give: the knowledge of true worship and the grace of the Holy Mysteries. But our era suffers from a famine of truth and the true worship of God. In our weak way, we try to feed those who hunger for God. Your prayers and your donations help the Church in this awe-inspiring ministry. Another way to help is to make a bequest to the Church in your will. Remember that God loves a cheerful giver. Also remember that *The Faithful Steward* is in need of your support.



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